



U.S. Immigration  
and Customs  
Enforcement

# Case Example

## *Worksite Enforcement*

June 16, 2006

### **The Kawasaki Restaurant Investigation**

So how does this new approach work differently than the previous enforcement method employed by the INS? Take the Kawasaki restaurant chain in Baltimore as an example...

### **ICE's approach in practice:**

In March of this year, ICE executed search, arrest and seizure warrants at three Kawasaki Restaurants - a small Japanese restaurant chain - and at four related residences where we encountered fifteen undocumented workers living in deplorable conditions. Benefiting from their illegal workforce, the owners of the restaurants had created a lavish lifestyle for themselves. Fortunately, the three business owners were criminally arrested for money laundering and harboring of illegal aliens.

- ICE seized assets including eight luxury vehicles, ten bank accounts and three safety deposit boxes and cash found during the residence and business searches.
- The owners have since pleaded guilty to these felony charges and agreed to forfeit approximately \$1.1 million in assets.

### **The old approach:**

How would this case have been handled differently prior to ICE's new approach?

Historically, INS agents would have used administrative tools. They would have likely conducted an I-9 inspection at the Kawasaki Restaurants to determine whether the employer was in compliance with IRCA. Following the inspection, the issuance of a fine based on paperwork violations would have likely been the end result.

Under the old way of doing business:

- The owners would likely escape even a misdemeanor charge.
- The maximum fine would have been approximately \$20,000, -- and in many cases, such a fine would be negotiated down even further, often down to half of the original penalty.

With such a paltry end result, it is not surprising that the old employer sanction regime had become simply a "cost of doing business".

#ICE#

*U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement was established in March 2003 as the largest investigative arm of the Department of Homeland Security. ICE is comprised of four integrated divisions that form a 21st century law enforcement agency with broad responsibilities for a number of key homeland security priorities.*